

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TSPA, MP

SUBJECT: CLEARANCE REQUEST FOR USNS VANGUARD

REF: PORT LOUIS 0651

1. USNS VANGUARD IS INSTRUMENTED TRACKING SHIP OPERATED BY MILITARY SEA LIFT COMMAND (MSC) FOR NASA. INSTRUMENTATION EQUIPMENT IS OPERATED BY CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES OF BENDIX CORPORATION UNDER CONTRACT TO NASA. SHIP USED FOR TRACKING, DATA ACQUISITION AND TRANSMISSION IN SUPPORT OF MANNED AND UNMANNED SPACE CRAFT PROGRAMS.

2. UNTIL FEBRUARY 1976 SHIP WILL OPERATE FROM VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN INDIAN OCEAN OFF EAST COAST OF AFRICA IN SUPPORT OF SEVERAL SCIENTIFIC SATELLITE LAUNCHES FOR PURPOSES OF METEOROLOGY, COMMUNICATIONS, EARTH ATMOSPHERE AND INTERPLANETARY EXPLORATION.

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3. SINCE VANGUARD LEFT US, NASA STATION AT TANANARIVE HAS BEEN CLOSED BY ORDER OF MALAGASY GOVERNMENT. CRITICAL LAUNCH SUPPORT THAT HAD BEEN SCHEDULED AT TANANARIVE MUST NOW BE PROVIDED BY THE VANGUARD. ONE OF THESE MISSIONS, ATMOSPHERIC EXPLORER-D (AE-D) REQUIRES INSTALLATION OF ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT ON SHIP.

OTHER SUPPORT COMMITMENTS MAKE IT DOUBTFUL THAT THIS INSTALLATION COULD BE COMPLETE IN TIME FOR AE-D LAUNCH ON SEPTEMBER 30 UNLESS SHIP CAN PICK UP NEW EQUIPMENT BEING AIRSHIPPED TO MSC HUSBANDING AGENT, IRELAND, FRASIER AND CO. LTD., IN PORT LOUIS. DEPENDING UPON LAUNCH SCHEDULES, WE ESTIMATE TWO TO THREE DAYS IN PORT BETWEEN AUGUST 23 AND 28.

4. INASMUCH AS VANGUARD AND ITS OPERATIONS ARE ENTIRELY UNCLASSIFIED, EMBASSY MAY WISH TO INVITE LOCAL DIGNITARIES TO VISIT SHIP. ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUCH VISITS MAY BE COORDINATED DIRECTLY WITH SHIP'S MASTER AND NASA REPRESENTATIVE ZINC ABOARD.

5. ALL INFO PROVIDED ABOVE CAN BE USED IN RESPONSE PRESS INQUIRIES.

6. FYI: NASA MAY REQUEST ADDITIONAL CLEARANCE FOR VANGUARD SUPPORT OF A GEOSTATIONARY OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SATELLITE FROM MAURITIUS. THIS SATELLITE IS CURRENTLY SCHEDULED FOR LAUNCH IN MID-OCTOBER. ADDITIONAL INFO WILL BE SUPPLIED AS SOON AS THE EXACT NATURE OF REQUIRED SUPPORT IS DETERMINED. END FYI.

7. FOR NAIROBI: FOLLOWING SECOND VIKING LAUNCH (NOW SCHEDULED SEPTEMBER 1) SHIP WILL GO TO MOMBASSA FOR REPROVISIONING AND CREW SHORE LEAVE. ESTIMATED DATES IN PORT 5-25 SEPTEMBER. MSC IS REVISING CLEARANCE REQUEST ACCORDINGLY. KISSINGER

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